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A FEW FACTS

ABOUT CARPETS

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1884

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John H. Pray...

THIS BOOK  
BELONGS TO

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THE  
VICTORIAN  
SOCIETY  
IN  
AMERICA  
••

AT THE ATHENAEUM  
OF PHILADELPHIA  
AND IS FROM  
THE DORNSIFE COLLECTION

A COPY OF THIS BOOK will be sent  
to any address upon application.

JOHN H. PRAY, SONS, & CO.,

558 and 560 Washington Street,

Boston, Mass.

MESSRS. PRAY & CO. suggest to their  
customers, that, in order to insure  
prompt and careful attention,

All correspondence should be ad-  
dressed to the FIRM.

Prompt notice should be given when  
work is not satisfactory.

The firm desire to know of ANY  
MATTER causing serious annoyance.

Any misunderstanding as to goods  
should be reported immediately, that  
all such matters may be adjusted  
promptly.

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JOHN H. PRAY, SONS, & CO.,

558 and 560 Washington Street,

Boston, Mass.

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# GARPET NOTES.

## INDEX.

PAGE	PAGE		
ANTIQUE CARPETS . . . . .	5	LIGNUMS . . . . .	20
TURKEY CARPETS . . . . .	5	PAPER . . . . .	20
INDIAN CARPETS . . . . .	6	LINING . . . . .	20
PERSIAN CARPETS . . . . .	6	COVERING FOR STAIR-CAR-	
SAXONY CARPETS . . . . .	7	PETS . . . . .	21
ANTIQUE RUGS . . . . .	7	STAIR-RODS . . . . .	21
DAGHESTAN RUGS . . . . .	8	WIDTHS OF CARPETS . . .	22
AMERICAN SMYRNA CAR-		MOTHS . . . . .	23
PETS AND RUGS . . . . .	10	SWEEPING CARPETS . . .	24
SURROUNDS, OR FILLINGS, .	11	NAPHTHA CLEANSING . .	25
WHOLE AND BREADTH AX-		BEATING CARPETS . . .	25
MINSTERS . . . . .	12	WASHING CARPETS . . .	26
WILTONS . . . . .	12	CLEANSING ON FLOOR . .	26
BRUSSELS . . . . .	13	VARNISHING OIL-CLOTHS .	27
TAPESTRIES . . . . .	14	CLEANSING OIL-CLOTHS .	27
ENGLISH WOODSTOCK CAR-		STORAGE OF CARPETS . .	27
PETS . . . . .	14	MAKING AND LAYING CAR-	
INGRAINS . . . . .	15	PETS . . . . .	28
SAMPLE PATTERNS . . . . .	17	HINTS ABOUT MEASURING	
STRAW MATTINGS . . . . .	18	(WITH WOOD-CUT) . . .	29
OIL-CLOTHS . . . . .	19	HINTS UPON LAYING CAR-	
LINOLEUMS . . . . .	19	PETS . . . . .	31

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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THE following facts have been gathered by Messrs. John H. Pray, Sons, & Co., after an experience of several years, and are confirmed largely by that of their many customers. In giving them, they are to serve the purpose of conveying information, such as will enable many others to determine for themselves the comparative value of different makes and kinds of carpets.

Should they enable any one to make his selection with more ease, rapidity, and satisfaction to himself, much will have been accomplished.

Yet what is here written should in no way be regarded as a complete description, but rather a mention of the more important features of those carpets considered the most prominent.

Should some matters referred to seem to be outside the scope of this article, it can be said that no reference is

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made to any matter which is not in some way directly affected by, or affecting directly, the carpet.

Allusion to some of the subjects (such as moths and their habits) is made because of the inquiry about such matters.

The advantages in purchasing of a firm like Messrs. Pray & Co., having a large wholesale and retail business, are many. There is a strong tendency to charge less than an exclusively retail establishment. Their stock is always much larger in every department, and their facilities for prompt delivery are far better.

It is suggested, that, in *furnishing*, the first real selection, after deciding upon a general coloring, should be the carpet.

It is regarded, by those most competent to judge, as the *foundation* of the whole. It is far easier to match or harmonize the paper and paint to the carpet, than to attempt to do the opposite.

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**Antique Carpets.**—Ranking first, as they do, for durability, beauty, dissimilarity of design, and mellowness of coloring, they naturally command first place for fine furnishing, where a rug or carpet centre, with a surround of wood or carpet, is desired.

They are adapted more particularly for the reception-rooms and large entrance-halls.

The material for surrounds, or outside filling, is referred to later on.

Prices on these goods vary much, their condition and the style of the carpet determining the price; but the latter is also governed largely by the establishment where purchased.

**Turkey Carpets.**—Of goods woven whole, these commend themselves to the especial attention of the purchaser, for solid reasons. They have not deteriorated of late years, but still retain their former reputation for quality, immense durability, and beauty. We have known these goods to go through fire and water, and, by proper cleansing, to regain their lustre, and wear many years after.

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Being made mostly in greens and reds, they retain their color far better than some others.

For these and other reasons, Messrs. Pray & Co. have considered it advisable to import this year a larger line than ever, which they are offering at prices somewhat less than heretofore. They are especially desirable for library and dining-room.

**Indian Carpets.**—Although these often take precedence, in matter of style and æsthetic coloring, of the Turkey carpets, the wearing qualities of some grades are gradually compelling the purchaser to be more cautious in his selection. Messrs. Pray & Co. carry a fine assortment of these goods, to which they invite attention. For fine effects in the reception-rooms, they have few superiors.

**Persian Carpets.**—These goods vary in quality and in style full as much as any make of Eastern carpets. They can be found in the finest woven, the most delicately designed patterns, and in great variety of color. The purchaser who is enabled to procure

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the better quality of these goods will never regret his purchase.

**Saxony Carpets.**—These are a German production, of which Messrs. Pray & Co. can speak in high terms, after an experience of some twenty years in their importation and sale. They closely resemble the Turkey carpets, and are closer in their weave ; while their whole appearance is a strong assurance of their fine wearing qualities. Messrs. Pray & Co. have been quite successful in their importation of special orders in solid centres, and their book of designs will enable any one to choose that which is best adapted to the coloring and furnishing of his room. They have exclusive control of these goods for the Eastern States.

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**Antique Rugs.**—Much that can be said of the carpets will apply as well to the rugs. It is seldom that there are two alike in pattern ; the sheen upon them is often exquisite ; they are made in a great variety of shapes ; and the customer has the opportunity to select

from a very large stock. The claim that Messrs. Pray & Co. make, that their prices on these goods are more reasonable than at any other establishment, will be proved by an examination of their stock. There are decided advantages in purchasing any kind of Oriental goods from this firm, as their stock is a culled selection by one of the partners. Far less trouble is needed in selecting, even, than in London, where no doubt the stock is larger, but containing much of what would be considered undesirable.

**Daghestan Rugs.**—These are hand-woven, exactly as the antique. Although lacking the softness of color of the antique rugs, which is produced by age, they have the advantage of a more even surface, and are wholly without blemish. Their stock of these is larger than at any other establishment in Boston, and their prices lower.

For some reasons already expressed, and others equally strong, it is hardly practicable to quote prices of Eastern carpets; but Messrs. Pray & Co. invite intending purchasers to send (or request to be taken) an outline-plan

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of the space for which the carpet is required. Should there be nothing in their stock suitable in size and color, they have at their office a memorandum of sizes and colorings which can be obtained abroad by their agents.

Messrs. Pray & Co. also desire to state, that a whole carpet a few inches too long, or wider than it should be, can be reduced in size at small expense, and without in the least injuring the fabric. Besides, by their method, the carpet can be placed back into its original shape at any time.

But while the able report on the East-Indian Exhibition in Paris states the slow deterioration of Eastern carpets, in texture, design, and other characteristics for which they have been formerly noted, more modern inventions in carpets, both English and American, show wonderful progress in all particulars, no doubt influenced for the better in many ways by the study of the older types. This is apparent, also, in the borders of carpets, as now woven, being much wider than formerly, drawn to more appropriate width, rendering it one of the most beautiful features of the modern style.

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Following these higher grades of whole carpets and rugs, there is an almost endless variety. Among the more prominent are the

**American Smyrna Carpets and Rugs**, which are constantly in stock, as per sizes below, and which are capable of being made in any special size required. These goods are double-faced, identically the same on both sides, and, in the better make, wear splendidly.

Mistakes are often made by the customer in comparing prices on these goods ; as their sale, being so tremendous, has caused several grades to be manufactured, which, of necessity, come in competition with each other. *Quality* as well as *price* should be considered.

LARGE SIZES.	SMALLER SIZES.
4 ft. x 7 ft.	3 ft. x 6 ft.
6 " x 9 "	2½ " x 5 "
7 " x 11 "	26 in. x 52 in.
9 " x 12 "	20 " x 48 "
	18 " x 36 "

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**Surrounds.**—Outside of the parquetry, which is made in an almost endless variety of woods and designs, but where any but the best is apt to cause much future trouble, and where the expense of this deters many from considering it, Messrs. Pray & Co.'s establishment furnishes various substitutes. After considering the plain Axminster, Wilton, and Velvet, as the more expensive, the space between the whole carpet or rug and the wall can be most appropriately filled with either a fine English felting, which is made in a variety of colors (tan, olive-green, maroon, peacock, and others), or with a plain color of best ingrain, English Kalmuc, or even a figured Kensington.

Where one desires more of a wood or stone effect, the tile Linoleums answer the purpose admirably, and are very reasonable in price.

Surrounds for billiard-tables are made from a great variety of articles; but for beauty, finish, and wear, the stair-carpet, either in Wilton, Velvet, or Brussels, has proved well adapted to the purpose. If a surface which can be washed is desired, Linoleum is an excellent article. A still finer furnishing for the billiard-room is to

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cover the entire space with a plain Lignum, and spread rugs where desired.

**Whole Axminster.**—The English goods, in which make those woven whole are mostly ordered, are made in a number of qualities ; and the prices vary per square yard accordingly. Samples of quality and designs for special orders can be seen at Messrs. Pray & Co.'s establishment. As in Berlin or Saxony carpets, any shaped room can be fitted. Their facilities for procuring the finest things were never better than now, and their prices compare favorably with those of other dealers. The same designs and many others can be had in *breadth* goods, at a *much less* price.

**Wiltons.**—This make of goods is steadily growing in favor, as the public realize the beautiful effects to be found, and their great durability. As the foreign makes are woven upon originally patented American machinery, it follows that the domestic goods of the better makes, at the low prices now prevailing, are a good purchase. The exception in favor of the English goods has to do more

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with the design and coloring, as it is a question whether their wear is any better for the same quality. Messrs. Pray & Co.'s stock of these goods is very choice, both in English and American. In the latter, the Lowell and Bigelow makes excel in all particulars.

**Brussels Carpets.**—It is hardly necessary to more than mention an article now so prominently before the public; one in whose manufacture thousands of looms are engaged, and the sale of which is so enormous; an article as staple as silk in dry-goods, yet, like the latter, made in various qualities.

The perfection of design and coloring would seem to have reached its limit, so elegant have they become, enabling one to furnish in almost any way desired; while the borders, expressly drawn for the carpet, enhance its beauty. The English Brussels now arriving were selected by one of their firm, and excel any previous importations; while the prices are lower than last year.

Messrs. Pray & Co. are the largest dealers in the very best makes (Lowell and others), and are the chief customers of some manufacturers making other grades.

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It is suggested to their many customers, that it is far more satisfactory in the end to buy the *best*. There are grades of Brussels advertised to sell at a very low price, which are made from poor wool (and of which there is very little), and, wear being the test, are not worth the price for which they sell. Such goods take the dye poorly. The customer is enabled to make comparisons, from a few sample pieces kept in stock.

**Tapestries.**—The great improvement in the designs, clearness of line, and color, make these goods more desirable than ever. They are made in a number of qualities, from the very cheap and almost worthless, through various grades, to those which can be fully commended.

Among those which are acknowledged to command first place, is the Roxbury make, in which Messrs. Pray & Co. have the best patterns, *private* for the United States, with borders drawn to match. They are adapted for all reception-rooms, chambers, and halls.

**English Woodstock Carpets.**—These goods, of which Messrs. Pray & Co. have full control, from the

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original manufacturers, for the whole United States, are made both in three-ply and two-ply grade. For fine quality, for evenness of weave, variety and beauty of design, they have no equal in Kidderminster goods.

Other manufacturers and dealers, acknowledging their wonderful success, have attempted competition by copying into American goods. The difference is apparent upon a most cursory examination. These goods are made in exclusive English designs, some with centres of solid colors, — blue, light tan, maroon, etc., — and all have handsome fringed borders.

These carpets placed upon a room, with a surround of plain material, make a beautiful and inexpensive floor-covering, as they cost less than the English breadth goods made up with borders.

Below, we give a full memorandum of sizes in yards.

#### THREE-PLY.

Yards.	Yards.	Yards.
$2\frac{1}{2} \times 3$	$3 \times 4$	$3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$
$3 \times 3$	$3\frac{1}{2} \times 4$	$4 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$
$3 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$	$3 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$	$4 \times 5$

TWO-PLY.		
Yards.	Yards.	Yards.
$2\frac{1}{2} \times 3$	$3 \times 4$	$3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$
$2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$	$3 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$	$4 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$
$3 \times 3$	$3\frac{1}{2} \times 4$	$4 \times 5$
$3 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$		

No prices are given, as they are liable to change somewhat from season to season ; but they will be gladly furnished when applied for.

**Ingrains.** — The terms "ingrains," "two-plies," and "Kidderminster" are synonymous as regards the character of the goods ; but by no means denote the quality, which is very varied. Messrs. Pray & Co. can most positively assert, that their line of ingrain carpets is not to be excelled in the United States ; and the reasons for its being so are easily discovered.

Their wholesale department enables them to purchase a very large line, while their buyers' taste and judgment have never been doubted ; and having the *first* choice, from the *best* makers, enables them to have, as private, many designs never even seen by other dealers. Many

of their nice ingrains, styled "Kensington," are copies from the English "Woodstock" whole carpets, enabling their customers to buy the English designs in American goods ; and, as will be seen elsewhere, as the Woodstocks are confined by their original makers to them alone, these patterns are their own exclusively.

**Sample Patterns.**—For the convenience of a large and increasing New-England trade, Messrs. Pray & Co. make it an especial branch of their business, to select, according to their best judgment, such patterns as they think will please those who are not at liberty to make their selection at their store. They would suggest to such as send for samples, the advisability of stating their preferences for any particular color, or style of design, as well as the rooms for which they are intended.

There need be no fear of any attempt on the part of a respectable dealer to send patterns of undesirable goods ; for, should the first selection not prove satisfactory, another can readily, and would be gladly, sent. Their line of samples at their Boston warehouse is especially large.

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**Straw Mattings.**—Great improvements in the direction of the perfection of these goods have been made, especially during the past few years. Many of the old styles are still imported ; but there has, besides, come into the market a large variety of patterns and colorings, both in fancy and solid colors, among the latter of which there are red, old-gold, blue, green, etc. A change in the weave of the better qualities adds much to their value and beauty. They are now made without joins, rendering them reversible, where necessary on account of any discoloration.

The custom of allowing these goods to remain upon the floor the whole year, is growing in favor ; and where the prices are so very cheap as at present, it is a temptation to furnish the house complete, as other carpets can be laid directly over them.

A very novel effect is produced by using fancy or solid colors for a dado. A very cool summer furnishing is to use some one of the plain mattings as a surround for a central rug. A thin coat of white varnish applied to a straw matting will help to retain its fresh color, as it is the contact with air which causes it to become dry.

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**Oil-cloths.**—Messrs. Pray & Co. carry an exceedingly large and varied stock of these goods, ranging from the very low-priced to the best in the market. In addition to the American makes, they import from the *best* English manufacturers, as will be seen in the widths of goods given elsewhere. The cheaper goods can be furnished in 4-4, 5-4, 6-4, 8-4, and 10-4; while the better grades, being made 12, 15, 18, and 24 feet wide, enables one to cover almost any sized space, without a seam.

For the preservation of these goods, reference is made to an article on “Varnishing Oil-cloths.”

**Linoleums.**—Great prominence has been given to these goods of late years. Their great durability, softness to the tread, and the number of qualities in which they are made, together with the various uses to which they are adapted, have occasioned quite a marked demand. The figured goods can never, however, take the place of a finely finished sheet oil-cloth, as the pattern wears off more easily, and varnishing is not recommended by the manufacturers. These goods were formerly made but six feet wide, but can now be procured much wider.

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The prices on these goods vary according to quality. For offices and public places, the plain is regarded as the best for hard wear. There is also manufactured a thin quality suitable for stair-carpet. The borders made for these goods are in various widths, and are drawn to match.

**Lignum.**—Manufactured, as the name indicates, from wood-pulp and other substances, they combine many of the good features of the linoleum and the oil-cloth. The Italian tile-effects produced in these goods make them particularly attractive.

Seams are avoided in these goods, as they are made as wide as twenty-four feet.

**Paper.**—Except under straw mattings and oil-cloths, preventing the latter from sticking to the floor, its use is not recommended.

**Lining.**—This is an article moths will not touch. It is made with an even layer of cotton between two papers which are stitched together, thereby saving it, and en-

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abling one with care to use it several times. Its use is almost universal. It makes the carpet softer to the tread ; it saves it from the inequalities of the floor, and causes the carpet to wear longer and more evenly. It is one yard wide, and the price for the best is ten cents per yard.

**Coverings for the Stair-carpets.**—These can be had in the ordinary stair oil-cloth, in felting, or in a thin oil-cloth or linoleum. Should one desire a nicer article, the English felting, 48 inches wide, can be so cut in strips as to cause little if any waste, and yet be of sufficient width.

**Stair-rod.**—Of these, Messrs. Pray & Co. have a large case of samples, very conveniently arranged for inspection, with designs in brass, nickel, copper, and handsome woods. They would be pleased to send samples, from which to select, when requested to do so.

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## WIDTHS OF CARPETS.

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### AXMINSTERS, MOQUETTES, WILTONS, BRUSSELS, TAPESTRIES.

In body goods, 27 inches.

### BORDERS FOR THE ABOVE.

Mostly  $22\frac{1}{2}$  inches; some 18 and 27 inches, and still a few 9 and  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

### STAIR-CARPETS FOR THE ABOVE.

27,  $31\frac{1}{2}$ , and 36 inches.

### ALL WOOLLENS.

3 feet wide.

### WOOLLEN BORDERS.

Mostly 18 inches.

### WOOLLEN STAIRS.

18,  $22\frac{1}{2}$ , and 27 inches, and sometimes wider.

### STRAW MATTINGS.

Almost invariably 3 feet.

### OIL-CLOTHS.

From 3 feet wide in the cheaper qualities, to 18 and 24 feet in the very best.

### LIGNUMS.

12 and 18 feet.

### LINOLEUMS.

6, 9, and 12 feet.

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**Moths.**—Many are not aware that all the *present* damage is done when the millers commence to fly, as their very presence indicates the absence of the worm. It is to prevent the miller's incubating, that precautions should be taken. A larger proportion of the millers never hatch eggs, but die without causing any harm. The male miller, which does not fly, but runs very rapidly, is quite easily detected by his triangular-shaped figure ; but, keeping himself out of sight, he is not so easily found. His hiding explains the devious flights of the female in her search. The killing of one male is equal to the extinction of many ordinary millers. The male miller is commonly known by the name of "silver fish."

Carpets are seldom troubled with moth-worms, except where hatched in a dark, unprotected space, and where it is moderately warm. It is for this reason, no doubt, that carpet-houses are seldom, if ever, troubled by them ; the stocks in the larger houses being disposed of between seasons. Where an establishment like that of Messrs. Pray & Co. has an outlet for the disposal of their goods, both at wholesale and retail, there is no opportunity ;

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while, in a smaller store, the goods move slowly, and remain longer upon the shelf.

Nearly all the trouble from moths emanates from the furniture ; the burlap inside the outer covering being their best field for work, where they can be free from annoyance, and find plenty to eat. Many of the furniture dealers of to-day realize their danger, and cleanse the burlap used with naphtha. It is when the worms are either tired of their food, or it lacks the nourishment that they desire, that they seek an outlet, and drop upon the carpet. It is well to examine the furniture once a year at least, to prevent such happenings.

**Sweeping Carpets.**—Oriental carpets should be swept with a broom of stiff fibre ; always, of course, in common with all pile carpets, in the direction of the pile. No alarm need be felt, however, if a little of the loose wool comes away with sweeping. Should it continue, prompt notice should be given, as a firm having regard for their business reputation would desire to set the matter right ; and herein lies the advantage in purchasing

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carpets from those who have a reputation, and an interest in maintaining it.

In the matter of selection between the many different carpet-sweepers, the choice of the best is largely one of individual preference of the customer.

**Cleansing Carpets (Naphtha Process).**—This is regarded as the surest and most satisfactory, where there is the slightest suspicion of moth eggs or worms. It is especially adapted to pile carpets. Caution should be exercised as to the purity and clearness of the naphtha used, and the thorough extraction of the grease, else the dirt adheres more easily than before. Where carpets are to remain on storage some time, the odor can be left in the carpet if desired. A more thorough cleansing can be assured by having the carpet beaten first. A surface application of naphtha will drive the impurities through the article, to be absorbed by that which is under it.

**Beating.**—There was a time when all work of this kind, done by hand, was preferred; but in the absence of men who do it thoroughly, and the lack of available

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space for such operations, the improved carpet-beating machines are heartily recommended. They do their work thoroughly, evenly; and in one place, at least, it can be said, that no danger exists from any thing getting into the carpet from previous cleanings, as all dirt is carried off immediately. Where work of this kind is done at home, care should be exercised that the article is beaten on its back, in order that the dirt may be forced from the place where it has settled. The best instrument in use is a rattan with a large loop.

**Washing.**—The dye-houses have done some very satisfactory work on woollen carpets, but the process shrinks the carpet very much.

**Cleansing on Floor.**—Where oil is required to be removed, without taking up the carpet, pipe-clay thoroughly beaten into the carpet will absorb it within forty-eight hours, when it can be brushed off. This is just the opposite, in its action, from naphtha. Water spilt upon carpets should be sopped up, not rubbed.

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**Cleansing Oil-cloths.** — A solution (not too strong) of castile soap and water is all that is needed to cleanse them properly. Nothing should be used which will soften the varnish.

**Varnishing Oil-cloths.** — In order to retain for a number of years the freshness of the original pattern, the oil-cloth should receive, at least once a year, an even coat of the best copal varnish, with but little turpentine added, unless time for drying is limited. An extra coat at time of purchase is worth many times the expense. It allows the paint to harden, while all the *wear* comes on the varnish. The cost, including labor, is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents per square yard. Varnishing linoleums is not advised, although it has been done occasionally with satisfactory results.

**Storage of Carpets.** — Where parties are to leave their house for some time, there seem to be but two alternatives for the sure protection of the carpets. If left in charge of any one, the seeming lack of necessity

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often prevents their receiving the attention they need. When taken up and beaten, folded in some regular shape, large bags made from heavy wide unbleached cotton, with a drawing-string, make the best possible covering. After drawing the string, tie another just below, which effectually prevents entrance at the mouth of the bag. There is no necessity for the larger outlay for camphor, paper, and burlap, made by some each year.

**Making and Laying Department.** — Messrs. Pray & Co. have recently re-organized this branch of their business, and feel better prepared than ever to do promptly, carefully, and in good taste, all work intrusted to them. They undertake to measure, wherever their customers desire, at no expense to them, where Messrs. Pray & Co. are to lay the goods, except the necessary travelling expenses of the upholsterer.

Their charges for labor vary, of course, according to the kind of work ; but they will gladly furnish a schedule of prices, upon application.

Where the measures permit of it, they cut their carpets to lie quite snug, as they wear much better.

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**Hints about Measuring.**—Many customers have occasion to mail plans or dimensions of spaces they desire covered in their out-of-town residences. A line of suggestion to such may be of service:—

1st, In the diagram of the space, locate all the jogs, doors, and windows, giving the length and depth.

2d, All measures should be taken in feet and inches, drawing the tape just taut.

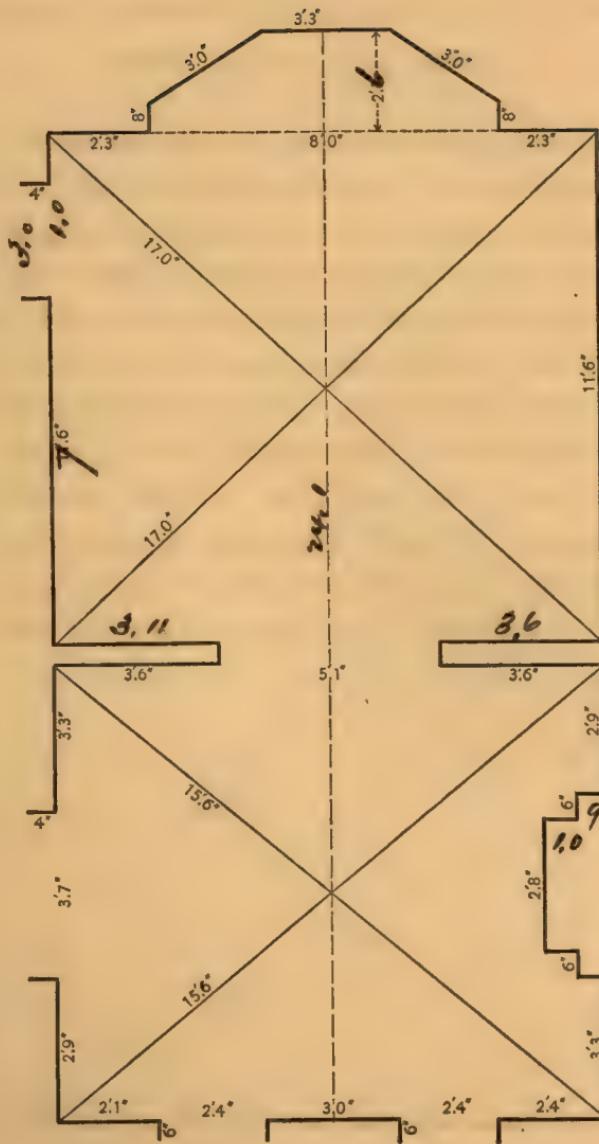
3d, Measures for bordered carpets should be taken as fine as the quarter-inch, giving the net measure with no allowance.

4th, Any preferences as to the running of the breadths and the figure should be mentioned, and the front of the room indicated upon the plan.

5th, The length of the stair-carpet should include half a yard extra to allow for the change.

The following cut gives all the measurements required, even for a bordered carpet.

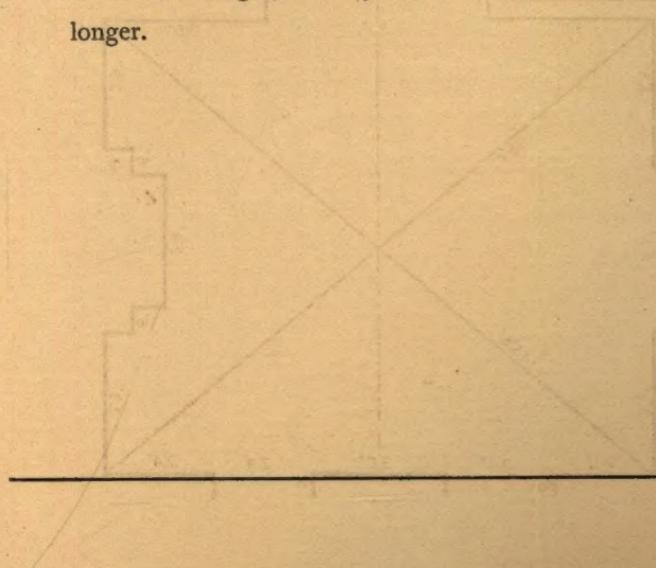
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**Hints upon Laying Carpets.**—Spread the entire carpet on the floor. Turn back a portion to allow for the spreading of the lining over one-half the room, lapping the latter so as to retain the dirt upon the surface. Then open that portion of the carpet, after which spread the other half. Commence to lay the carpet on the straight side, fitting the window-recesses, jogs, and fireplace last.

All plaits on stair-carpets should be made on the rise, and never on the tread. The upholsterer should be cautioned, if necessary, about using too large a tack. Customers should insist upon having their carpets laid smooth and tight, as they look better, and wear much longer.



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FOR the assistance of those coming from other cities, the following is suggested as being the easiest means for reaching Messrs. Pray & Co.'s Carpet House:—

From the Albany and Old Colony Depots,—any South Boston car.

From the Providence Depot,—it is but a short distance through Boylston to Washington Street.

From the New-York and New-England Depot,—through Summer and Bedford to Washington Street.

From the Fitchburg, Maine, Lowell, and Eastern Depots,—any car for Summer Street.

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ESTABLISHED IN 1817.

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JOHN H. PRAY, SONS, & CO.,

Importers, Jobbers, Retailers, and Manufacturers' Agents.

\* CARPETINGS. \*

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558 and 560 Washington Street,

BOSTON.

NEW YORK OFFICE, 113 WORTH STREET.

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